

County budget not a popular one

Lake County commissioners said they had to pass a budget they didn't like for 2011 — and they aren't making friends because of it.

There will be others within the county who also don't like the budget, including department heads who must manage their offices while some of their employees lose their jobs due to decreases in funding.

One reason is because staffing is one of the biggest expenses for government, which means workers are usually cut as expenses need to be curbed.

Approved at 6.3 percent smaller than last year's spending plan, the county's \$54.83 million general fund budget means cuts to most departments with some more impacted than others.

The news likely isn't going to get any better as the year proceeds.

That's because further cuts might need to take place depending on Gov. **John Kasich's** state budget proposal and any changes made by the Ohio General Assembly, which must pass the budget before July 1.

Additional cuts to the county's general fund are likely this year and appropriation changes would occur, county Budget Director **Michael T. Matas** said.

What I foresee then are increased furloughs throughout the county and even the potential for some offices to close their doors on certain days or reduce their operational hours. Perhaps this may occur at the Lake County Elections Board?

During the past four years, the county's revenues have dropped \$7.5 million due to smaller investment earnings, property tax valuations dropping and sales tax revenues remaining flat.

It's quite possible that revenue may continue to decrease. One reason is because next year, the county Auditor's Office will conduct a required update on property valuation.



John Arthur Hutchison

update.

Inside millage collected by the county from property taxes would be reduced by roughly the same percentage of property value decreases, because there are no other reduction factors that apply to this type of tax, according Auditor **Edward H. Zupan-cic**.

His honor

Lake County Common Pleas Court Judge **Eugene Lucci** will be inducted into the Lake Geauga Young Republican Club Hall of Fame on May 6. A dinner to honor Lucci is scheduled that day at Cappelli's in Mentor.

Past inductees include Lake County Common Pleas Court Judge **Vincent Culotta**, **Greg Schmidt**, **Janet Clair**, Former Geauga County GOP Chairman **Lou Mucci**, former Mentor Councilman **B.J. Kresnye**, state Sen. **Tim Grendell**, Lake County Commissioner **Raymond E. Sines**, Lake County Republican Party Chairman **Dale Fellows**, former state Rep. **Jamie Callender** and U.S. Rep. **Steven C. LaTourette**.

For information about the dinner, see **Adam Rosplock**, **Brian Wollet** or **Matt Jaworski**.

As the real estate market continues to stagnate, the update will reflect values from the three-year period of 2009 through 2011 — all during the downturn in the economy.

The update likely will show property values continue to decrease, which would lock the county into even less revenue for the next three years following the

Geauga Dems

Ohio House Minority Leader **Armond Budish** will speak on Senate Bill 5, Gov. Kasich's budget proposals, repeal of the estate tax, hydrofracking in state parks, anti-choice legislation, and many other statewide and local issues at 6:30 p.m. Monday at Geauga County Democratic Party Headquarters and Social Hall, 12420 Kinsman, Newbury Township.

Admission is \$20 and includes a light dinner and dessert. See Party Chairwoman **Janet Carson** or visit www.geaugadems.org.

The county Democratic Party will also host a town hall forum on Hydraulic Fracking in Ohio at 3 p.m. April 3 at the same location.

Filings

According to the Lake County Elections Board, the latest candidacy filings are **Amy L. Dawson** for Concord Township fiscal officer; **Bruce Landeg** for Mentor Council Ward 3; **Caroline N. Luhta** for Concord Township trustee.

Fundies

■ Mayor **Mark Tyler** of Kirtland will host a Gathering of Friends, 5:30 to 7:30, April 14 at Dino's Restaurant on Route 306. See **Rick Blum** or **Sandy Tyler**.

■ **Luhta** will host a fundraiser from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., April 28 at Hellriegel's Inn in Painesville Township. See **Chris Galloway**, **Paul Malchesky** or **Luhta**.

John Arthur Hutchison's column appears Sundays in The News-Herald. View it online at www.northernohiolocalpolitics.blogspot.com.

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